



View from the Blackdown Hills

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Issue 79 May 2011

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Work register website is live

CHANCE FOR RESIDENTS TO PUT NAMES DOWN FOR MUCH-NEEDED JOBS AS NEW HOSPITAL IS PLANNED

By **LUCIE SIMIC**
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

A WEBSITE facility to allow local residents and businesses to pre-register for work on a planned new hospital development on the edge of the Blackdown Hills went live during a recent meeting of Wellington Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber chairman Sue White pressed the button to launch the facility during a presentation by Montpelier Estates Ltd, which has submitted a planning application for the development at Chelston, on the edge of the town of Wellington.

The secure hospital will take up to 72 patients suffering from mental illness and learning disabilities, with about half of the beds being for women.

James McGarry, a director of Montpelier Estates, told the chamber of commerce how the new Chelston Hospital would provide about 225 full-time equivalent jobs with an annual wage bill of more than £5 million.

He said the hospital would be spending more than £1million a year on local services and products.

Sue White said: "I think most people recognise how

badly Wellington needs new jobs for local people and opportunities for local businesses to grow. We are delighted that Montpelier Estates has chosen to work closely with the chamber of commerce to deliver these opportunities for local businesses and residents if the development goes ahead."

Mr McGarry said two new pages added to the Chelston Hospital website gave details of the types of services which the facility would require and the jobs which would be available.

He said: "We hope people will visit the dedicated website www.thenewchelstonhospital.co.uk and take the opportunity to pre-register their interest in jobs and the provision of services."

"They can simply tick the boxes they are interested in and add their email and telephone contact details and then submit directly to us."

"If we are successful in gaining planning consent, we can then be in touch with them very quickly to start the ball rolling."

"We believe that buying locally makes business sense as it anchors the hospital in the community and is seen to contribute visibly to the local economy. In a recent study,

Northumberland County Council found that as well as the initial contracts, local suppliers in Northumberland spent on average 76 per cent of their income from contracts with local people and businesses.

"This means that every £1 spent with a local supplier is worth £1.76 to the local economy."

Priory Group, the proposed operator of the Chelston Hospital, already operates more than 50 hospitals, schools, and care homes nationwide.

It is planning low security and medium security facilities at the Chelston Hospital to offer mental health services which currently are not fully provided in the south west.

Montpelier Estates has provided more than 500 specialist beds in the past nine years, working with the NHS, charities, and independent providers.

Because of the lack of facilities in the south west, there are currently about 100 people with mental illness or learning difficulties who have to be treated outside the region, meaning families often have to travel and stay away in order to visit them.

Priory Healthcare has a dedicated learning and development team which helps staff to develop their skills and expertise and gain relevant qualifications.

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New high-speed sponsorship off to a flying start

By LUCIE SIMIC

blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

A NEW high-speed sponsorship deal for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance (DSAA) has seen a winning start.

The air ambulance's yellow Euro 135 helicopter is now spray painted on both sides of a Ford Fiesta 1.6 Zetec S rally car built to the new World Rally R2 regulations.

The rally car was built by brothers Tim and Steve Jones, of Formula Cars Volvo, based near Wellington, Somerset.

They drove to victory in their class (cars up to 1600cc) on their first outing — on the

high speed test track at the Ministry of Defence's tank testing centre near Bovington, Dorset — just two weeks after the car was completed.

Their next event will be the European Rally Championship and Intercontinental Rally Challenge round in Ypres, Belgium, in June, followed by World Rally Championship rounds in Germany, in August, and France, in September, as well as selected events throughout the UK.

The brothers also hope to take their rally car to DSAA fund-raising events across Dorset and Somerset.

Tim Jones said: "We wanted to support a worthwhile charity and as we have both had first hand experience of seeing Air

Ambulances in action at various events, it was an obvious choice for us to support our local service."

DSAA communications manager Tracy Bartram said: "We are thrilled that Tim and Steve have chosen to support us. It is fantastic publicity for the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and it will help raise the awareness of the important work that all Air Ambulances do nationally.

"We will follow their progress closely and are excited about how the relationship will develop."

More details about the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance can be found by visiting www.dsairambulance.org.uk or emailing info@dsairambulance.org.uk.



◆ TIM and Steve Jones competing in their Ford Fiesta R2 rally car in Bovington, Dorset, with the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance emblazoned on its sides

WORKING OUR WOODLANDS

Blackdown and East Devon
Woodland Association with
John Greenshields

APRIL was a scorcher, no one saw that coming, but not only will it affect your garden but also most trees — especially young ones.

I know I go on about it but it is important to check young trees regularly. Young trees take, in ideal conditions, three to four years to establish their root system, hence the need to suppress weed growth and keep hydrated.

The Woodland Association had its annual meeting in April with a good turn out, although the hot evening and an accident blocking the A35 caused a few problems.

The speakers and the hospitality from the Offwell fundraisers, who supplied supper, was great.

The Working our Woodlands second chainsaw awareness course in May is now full, but if there are enough interested parties we will arrange another in due course.

There are still a few places in the managing woodland for woodfuel and wildlife course left, these courses are very popular and there is more info on the web site at www.woodbiz.co.uk.

WOW, FC and the Neroche Scheme, with help from the new Blackdown Hills Trust, are piloting a scheme, with funding from the FC, called the Blackdown Carbon Management Programme.

Its main aims are to deliver focused advice to land owners to create more woodlands.

To monitor new planted woodlands and hedges for woodfuel production for the future, and try to break down perceived barriers within the FC's grant aid system.

This is a hell of a task but it has to start somewhere, so if you are thinking of planting a hectare or more of new woodland please get in touch.

There are a few bank holidays coming up, so instead of being stuck in traffic for hours why not plant a tree?

Take the kids to see some of the wonderful woods and wild places which will be in full bloom and a myriad of colour.

My usual contacts are 01823660764 or parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk.

Contact the news team at blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

Your VIEW FROM THE BLACKDOWN HILLS team



EDITORIAL MANAGER
KATE WILLIAMS
kate@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 631120



SUB-EDITOR
LUCIE SIMIC
lucie.simic@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 631120



CHIEF REPORTER
ANDERS LARSSON
anders@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 631120



REPORTER
BEN MIDDLETON
ben@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 631120



ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
LUCY STEAD
lucy.stead@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32078



ACCOUNTS MANAGER
STEVE DOWNTON
s.downton@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32078



ADVERTISING MANAGER
ALEX PHRYCE-JONES
alex@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32667



DEPUTY AD MANAGER
LOUISE NIDD
louise@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32601



SALES EXECUTIVE
ROSE SIWEK
rose.siwek@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32637



SALES EXECUTIVE
KELLY BAKER
kelly@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32634



SALES EXECUTIVE
JULIE HAMMOND
julie@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32592



SALES EXECUTIVE
CHELSEA BRANCH
chelsea@tindlenews.co.uk
01297 32667

HOW TO CONTACT US

NEWSROOM01297 631120

ACCOUNTS01297 32078

Pulman's View, Tindle House, South Street,
Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD
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Four youngsters' get on forestry apprentice pilot

By LUCIE SIMIC
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

FOUR young people in east Devon and Somerset are gaining valuable forestry experience on a pilot apprentice scheme.

The scheme, which is headed by the Forestry Commission in partnership with The Silvanus Trust and Bickton College, is giving them the chance to gain qualifications and hands-on work experience in forestry techniques.

The apprentices are learning skills essential to the sector and most recently they have had the chance to plant new trees. The recent tree planting season has given them the opportunity to learn more about planning, preparing and planting at sites such as Wild Warren Wood, near Axminster, where 5,000 mixed species were established and Buckland Wood on the Blackdowns where they planted 1000 spruce trees. They have also been working to develop essential woodland management skills such as the use of a chainsaw and brush cutter.

In addition two of the apprentices have gained tree climbing skills which have already been put to good use when they assisted with erecting owl boxes high in the branches on Exmoor. They will go on to assist local teams with necessary tree surgery work this month. Others are being trained in high pruning and how to process smaller branches into wood chip.

One of the apprentices, Tom Houlden working for Clinton Devon Estates in east Devon, says: "We are being given great opportunities to gain qualifications and valuable work experience, which will really help us gain employment in the future. I am enjoying the variety of the training and developing my skills and would definitely like to work in the sector in the future."

Commenting on the progress of the apprentice scheme, David West, development manager at the Forestry



Commission says: "Forestry is an incredibly important sector, particularly within the South West of the country. In these times of economic difficulty, and with concern about employment, particularly for young people, it is fantastic that apprentices are being given the chance to develop essential skills and experience, which will hopefully lead them on to successful careers."

Jane Hart, apprentice coordinator from The Silvanus Trust says: "I'm really pleased with how they are progressing and showing such

enthusiasm for taking on new tasks. In one year they have already developed so much and I thank our partner organisations, and those that have provided work placements for their input - this is a great example of an effective apprentice scheme. The scheme is due to finish at the end of this year, and before then the guys are going to gain a lot more experience."

The pilot forestry apprenticeship programme is funded by Making it Local, incorporating funding from the EU, Defra, SWRDA and Leader, and the Forestry Commission.

Police call for fraud victims to speak up

RESIDENTS in Hemyock are being urged to contact police if they have recently been the victim of fraud.

Officers are currently investigating a case involving identity theft which they believe may have taken place in rural areas around Tiverton, Cullompton and Wellington, Somerset.

As part of the investigation police say they are particularly keen to hear from anyone in Hemyock who may have had mail stolen from their letter boxes or residents who have discovered that credit cards have been set up in their name between September 2010 and March this year.

Anyone with information should contact police on 08452 777444. Alternatively contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Distraction burglary warnings are issued

DEVON and Cornwall police have issued a general distraction burglary warning after "several" recent incidents around the county.

The suspect claims to be from either the water board or the gas board, which are both defunct.

A force spokesperson said: "Please be suspicious of any cold callers.

"Ask for identification and let no one into your house you do not know, however plausible, until you are certain they are legitimate.

"Cold callers should expect to be challenged these days.

"Please phone us with any information on 08452 777 444."

**CALL THE VIEW FROM THE
BLACKDOWN HILLS SALES
TEAM ON 01297 32601**

Events for all - even birds

THE Countryside Events programme is packed with events and things to do in the area. Whether you prefer a relaxed picnic among the bluebells, or the challenge of learning how to survive in the woods, there is an event for everyone.

Night owls can join in with moth trapping and bat hunts, while early birds can experience the glory of a woodland dawn chorus.

People of all ages can try new skills, including wildflower photography, woodworking and orienteering. There will be fun farm activities for under fives, while older children will enjoy bushcraft and stargazing.

There are over 60 low cost or free events in the programme, which has been produced by The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team and the Neroche Scheme.

The Countryside Events programme is available from local Tourist Information Centres, libraries, pubs and shops. Request a copy by calling 01823 680681, or see full listings online at www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk.



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**Blackdown Hills Artisans Trail
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Association**

You are invited to take part in the Blackdown Hills Artisans Trail on Saturday and Sunday, 7th and 8th May. Our local artisans will open their doors to you from 10am to 4pm on both days.

There is a wealth of creative talent tucked away in the Blackdown Hills making almost anything from bread to ceramics, from salami to sculptures, from cider to socks and from furniture to fish pate – and many of these artisans are amongst the Blackdown Hills Business Association's 300+ members.

We have 20 businesses opening their workshops and studios as part of the launch of the Artisans' Trail, which will take place during the weekend of Saturday and Sunday 7th and 8th May.

Come and see them at work; sample their produce, quiz them, admire their talent and skill; try your hand at some of the activities; even buy from them!

We know you will be amazed at what you discover tucked away in the Blackdown Hills – just follow the signs!

**Contact the news team at
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk**

To become a member of BHBA, Call 01823 681484 St Ivel House, Station Road, Hemyock, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3SJ info@bhba.org.uk
For details of business events and opportunities, visit our member website www.bhba.org.uk

Crowds gather for special hills heritage book launch

By **LUCIE SIMIC**
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

SIXTY people gathered at Neroche Parish Hall in Bickenhall on Friday, April 1st to celebrate the launch of a very special publication about the history and landscape of the Blackdown Hills.

Along the Wild Edge brings together the work of 40 contributors and covers a huge span of subjects and history. It has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is being offered to local residents for free.

The book takes the reader on a journey through the northern Blackdown Hills, following the edge of the scarp above Wellington and Taunton, and discovering the human and natural history of the landscape.

It explores the Iron Age on Blackdown Common, the Roman period in the foothills near Taunton, the Saxon estates and the Domesday Book records. Chapters explore the gargoyles of local churches, the history of the Wellington Monument, the wartime RAF at Culmhead, the Camden Artists at Applehayes and the nineteenth century estate at Otterhead.

The book has been produced with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the Neroche Landscape Partnership Scheme.

As such, the book is not being offered for sale and instead a copy is being offered free to all residents of the parishes within the Neroche Scheme area, together with others from outside the area who have been involved with the area in some way.

It has been a truly local effort, with contributions from both amateur and professional writers coordinated by the Neroche team.

The result is the most comprehensive book ever published about the Blackdown Hills, with a high quality finish and beautiful imagery.

Writing in the preface to the book, Dame Jenny Abramsky, chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "This book reflects the energy, creativity, curiosity and deep sense of affection of so many people for the Blackdown Hills. It is a fitting testament to the power of communities to reflect and add to their heritage, and the Heritage Lottery Fund is pleased to have supported the Neroche Scheme in producing this lasting legacy."

Neroche Scheme manager Gavin Saunders said: "We are delighted with the book, and hugely grateful to everyone who has given their time and knowledge to make it happen."

"Offering it to all residents in the northern part of the Blackdowns is our way of thanking everyone for their support and enthusiasm throughout the five years of the Neroche Scheme, and offering a lasting record of the Hills which hopefully will inspire people to explore it more deeply."

The book is available through a number of local events, including the Hemyock and Neroche parish meetings. In addition copies can be obtained any time during weekday working hours direct from the Neroche office, at the



Blackdown Hills AONB office in Hemyock. For more details phone 01823 680846 or visit www.nerochescheme.org.

The team is also looking for volunteers to take

copies of the book to old people's homes, and coffee mornings in the area, or to deliver copies to neighbours who may not be able to collect their own.

Broadband support

BLACKDOWN Hills residents and businesses are being called for last minute campaign support.

Somerset County Council is in a joint-bid with Devon County Council for millions from the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) agency's £530m pot to roll out superfast broadband across both counties.

A critical part of the bid is demonstrating the need for improved connectivity, which is where residents, businesses and community groups can play a part.

The leader of Somerset County Council, councillor Ken Maddock, said: "It's incredibly important that the people of Somerset get behind us on this."

"This bid is crucial for the future growth of Somerset's economy. We know from talking to businesses that a slow or lack of Internet is a real constraint on their growth and is a key barrier for companies deciding to invest in Somerset."

"Superfast broadband will ensure all businesses, urban or rural, remain competitive and it will open up new markets for them."

"It will also be good news for residents. Superfast broadband will mean you could download from the Internet at least 30 times quicker and could change the way we all access services or work."

"People will be able to work more from home which will make a real difference to reducing commuting and help the environment."

Those wishing to support the campaign are asked to visit www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk and follow the instructions.

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More music and mayhem

DUE to the success of last year's Music and Mayhem the event will be taking place again this year on Sunday, August 28th from 11am to 7pm in the village of Culmstock.

There will be plenty of food to choose from including pizza, bread and sweet treats from The Common Loaf; organic hog roast provided by Moonbeams Land and burgers from Wallace's as well as luxury ice-cream from Styles Farm.

There will also be plenty to tempt you in the craft stall area including jewellery, pottery, greeting cards, children's books, wooden furniture, hammocks and hanging chairs, decorative items and accessories for the home,

hand-made soaps, garden plants and herbs.

Organisers are still in the early stages of organising this year's event but are already in the process of securing the same level of entertainment as last year and, due to the fantastic feedback they had from visitors, entertainers and traders, they are very confident that this year will be bigger and better.

The main idea for holding Music and Mayhem was to raise funds for organisations in the parish of Culmstock and organisers are pleased to announce that, following an application process, the Music and Mayhem Committee will be awarding part of the profits raised to the following:

- £250 to Fit to Go for funding towards new exercise equipment
 - £225 to Culmstock School for funding towards new drums
 - £120 to Culmstock Pre-school for a new digital camera
 - £250 to the Culmstock Society for funding towards providing facilities to hold Royal Wedding celebrations in the village
- The remainder of the funds will be reinvested into this year's event. Event organisers are still looking for sponsors and volunteers to help out on the day. Contact Kirsty Harris on 01884 840356 or email kirmats@btinternet.com if you are interested in promoting this year's event or available to help.

blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

A View from the Blackdowns



◆ THE rolling Blackdown Hills near Stockland

Do you have a photo of a View from the Blackdowns? Email it to blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

Health workers warn to watch out for cancer

By **LUCIE SIMIC**
blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

HEALTH professionals are advising people in the Blackdown Hills to be aware of bowel cancer — urging them to make an appointment with their GP if they have certain symptoms.

The advice was part of Bowel Cancer Awareness Month in April, which is organised to make people more aware of the signs and symptoms of the illness which strikes around 37,500 people each year in England and Wales.

According to NHS Somerset, a recent survey by charity Beating Bowel Cancer showed fewer than half of men (52 per cent), and over a quarter of women (29 per cent) in England and Wales claimed not to know any of the symptoms of bowel cancer, and when questioned, fewer than a third of people (32 per cent) were able to name two or more symptoms.

Dr Ulrike Harrower, a public health consultant with NHS Somerset said: "Early diagnosis is important. It can literally save lives.

"Patients whose cancer has not spread beyond the inner lining of the bowel have a much higher chance of successful treatment compared to those whose cancer has become widespread.

"If diagnosed early over 90 per cent of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully."

In Somerset there are around 400 cases of the illness each year and 150 deaths.

As part of the NHS Bowel Screening Programme the NHS routinely tests men and women aged 60-74 by sending them an invitation, test kit and information leaflet asking them to return the completed test to their local screening centre.

The county's screening programme aims to detect bowel cancer at an early stage in people who have not experienced any symptoms themselves. It is expected to reduce mortality by 16 per cent a year, equating to 1,200 lives.

Dr Harrower added: "Other symptoms to be aware of include unexplained anaemia causing tiredness or weight loss. Although in most cases it won't be cancer, if you have one or more of these symptoms for more than four to six weeks, get checked out. Your pharmacist can provide a leaflet which you can take with you to the doctors if it helps you explain the problem."

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms ask your family doctor for advice.

- A persistent change in bowel habit (four to six weeks)
- Bleeding from the bottom without any obvious reason
- Abdominal pain, especially if severe
- A lump in your tummy

For more information on the Beating Bowel Cancer campaign, visit the web site at: www.beatingbowelcancer.org.

www.viewfromtheblackdownhills.co.uk

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A View from the clubs

Hemyock men watch clip of a moon-walking bear during safe driving talk

"LOOK out for the moon-walking bear in this video clip," said Devon County Council's instructor on safe driving Mike Hull, because everyone had missed it the first time around.

The excise proved that unless we are looking for something on the road, we just won't see it, with potentially disastrous consequences.

Examples given were motor cyclists and bikers. Mike was addressing a breakfast meeting of Hemyock Men on the topic of safe driving, especially in older age, challenging the men to improve their skills despite the body's natural wear and tear.

The interactive workshop provided help and advice about modern driving including hazard perception, manoeuvrability, medication and eyesight and automatic cars.

◆ SOME of Hemyock Men who hope to drive better having taking part in a Devon County Council workshop. From left, Tim Hannaford, Mac McEwen, Mike Hull, Geoffrey Dearsley, Ron White



Ladies intrigued with Africa talk

PRESIDENT Gill Dennis opened the April meeting of the Smeatharpe Women's Institute (WI) and warmly welcomed several visitors, including three ladies from Upottery WI, who joined the group for the evening.

Details were given of a planned visit to Buckingham Palace in August.

The first walk for this year was on April 16th and finished with a bring and share lunch.

The charity for 2011 was announced as the Devon Air Ambulance.

Victoria Richardson introduced David Elington, who had engrossed members last year with a talk on Pompeii. He proceeded to do the same again with a talk

entitled The Romans in Africa.

With wonderful pictures and an enthusiastic, knowledgeable delivery, he took the ladies on a tour of north Africa following in the footsteps of the Romans.

Elizabeth Badman thanked him for his fascinating talk and presented him, a keen supporter and fundraiser for Shelterbox, with a cheque for £100 for that charity, which was raised during a recent coffee morning.

A good turnout for the competition of a glove puppet was won by Pernelle Rowe. The flower of the month was an iris brought in by Ann Slater.

The next meeting will be on May 12th when Keith Gibbs will introduce Fun Science Experiments. Visitors are always welcome.

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Primary pupils' activities

BUCKLAND St Mary Church of England Primary School was treated to a day of activities by the Somerset Waste Action Partnership.

The children learnt about conserving energy, eco-footprints and the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling. Neil Gemmell, from SWAP, ran three workshops working with children across the whole school.

KS1 children made decorative boards for light switches to remind people to turn unnecessary lights off, whilst KS2 children built bird scarers for their gardens, which handily doubled up as windmills.

Footballers from the school also took part in the 2011 Somerset FA Schools County Futsal Football Competition at Bucklers Mead School, Yeovil, recently.

The team played against schools such as Swanmead, Maiden Beech and Selwood. Futsal Football is a fast-paced

game played in teams of five with a smaller, heavier and less bouncy ball. Buckland failed to qualify for the FA Regional Futsal Qualifier, but nevertheless had a brilliant time.

Thanks goes to Sion Kitson of the FA for organising it and Rachael Auton who accompanied the children to their matches. Rachael said: "The children played brilliantly, learnt a lot and really enjoyed themselves. We will return all the stronger next year."

As a culmination to cooking sessions, the Lets Get Cooking Club at Buckland St Mary C of E Primary School held a tea party for their parents.

Mrs Lupton, head chef and school secretary, runs the club with assistance from Penny Hart, the school's singing teacher. They got the children cooking scones, chocolate muffins, honeycomb ice-cream and sponge cake. Squash and tea was also served by the children, who acted as waiters.



◆ CHILDREN enjoy the waste action activities day, above. Below left, team members who played in the football competition — Jack Forster, Sam Webber, Jay Webb, James Hine, James Salaman, Emily Croom and Joshua Lee. Below, from left, chefs Sam Webber, James Salaman, Alex Layard, Joshua Lee, head chef Emma Lupton and eager sampler Flora Layard



New map system for AONB online

NEW mapping on the Blackdown Hills AONB's website makes it easier to find events and routes for walking, horse riding and cycling.

Visitors to the site can now see at a glance where to go for a wide range of suggested routes. Clicking on start points then brings up detailed information about each one. The popular events calendar also has a new map showing locations, with easy links to full details.

Katherine Morgan, the AONB's information officer said: "Seeing the routes and events displayed in this way really brings home what a wide range of activities are on offer all over the Blackdown Hills. The new maps will hopefully inspire even more people to get outside and enjoy our wonderful countryside."

To see the new maps, visit the AONB website at www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk.



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countrysceneextra

Written by countryside
correspondent
TONY JACKSON



Meerkat tale in published book

ON many occasions in South Africa I have seen meerkats or, to give them their proper name, suricates, those attractive little members of the mongoose family which have achieved universal fame through TV advertising.

I have enjoyed the company of a tame meerkat in a camp in the Kalahari and watched, with amusement, as it sat up to bask in the early morning sun, or hunted for insects round the lodges.

Highly social, meerkats live together in packs of anything up to a score, and inhabit a labyrinth of tunnels.

Peaceful, enjoying each other's company and sleeping at night in seated groups, meerkats have up to three litters a year with three kits in each.

Why am I telling you this?

Well, if you pay a visit to Axe Valley Bird and Animal Park, just south of Axminster, you'll discover 150 species of birds and 27 species of animals, including a tribe of meerkats, with two youngsters called Wren and Rascal.

The park which has been created by Andrew and Jayne Collier, adjacent to their farm near Kilminster, was opened in 2008 and has proved highly successful.

Apart from the now extensive meerkat family, there are wallabies, racoons, otters, a coati, lemurs, skunks, chipmunks, barn owls, crane, kookaburras... the list goes on and on!

The park has proved an enormous success for Jayne and Andrew and as I have known them for some years it is so gratifying to see the energy and thought which has gone into this project come to fruition.

Now you can read the complete story of the park in a just published soft-back

The Meerkats of Summer Farm written by Jayne Collier and illustrated with many superb colour photos by Richard Austin.

Published by Sphere, the book costs a mere £6.99 and is a delightful read.

■ Recently I spent the day in the 3,000-acre Mortimer Forest, some 12 miles from the Welsh border and just below Ludlow.

This massive forest, run by the Forestry Commission, is home to a unique type of deer, the long-haired fallow.

There are in the region of 200 of this genetic type, and the true animal has a long shaggy coat and tufted ears.

Sadly, I did not see a specimen but this was only a flying visit to

discover the status of roe deer in Wales and in such a vast acreage of woodland the chances of spotting these elusive wild deer was remote.

As far as my main mission was concerned, I discovered that roe have now penetrated well into Wales, and in Radnorshire are deeply entrenched.

In fact, it would appear that these deer, far from naturally expanding their territory from England were, in fact, deliberately introduced and released in Welsh woodland around the 1970s and there is little doubt that, despite rigorous control to protect forestry interests, their expansion will continue.

Back home, the countryside has burst into a cacophony of green, stimulated by the warm golden days of sunshine which are so welcome after the long and dreary winter months.

Roes does will soon be dropping their fawns and though the normal time has, hitherto, been around the middle of May, there has been a tendency for ever earlier fawns to be seen.

I have had a report of a day-old fawn, apparently healthy, seen only a week or so ago, but this is exceptional.

There is no doubt that the recent spell of mild winters may have been an influencing factor.

This is one reason why, in my view, the recent extension of the open season to control does in March was a grave error as the majority of breeding does are carrying well developed foetuses by then.

On a more cheerful note I have had an email from a reader, Ana Pulteney from Ottery St Mary, to tell me that on March 30th she spotted a pair of swallows flying over the River Otter.

Back in the 1980s, she notes, the first swallows tended to arrive in mid April but now the first week of that month seems to see the early arrivals.

As yet our first swallows have to arrive but I am confidently expecting to see a pair, any day now, perched on the telephone wires surveying their nesting quarters in the stable.

I'd like to hear from any readers who have spotted their first swallow immigrants and also whether numbers are constant or seem to be reduced.

No mention of swallows in the latest Axe Estuary Birds newsletter from David Walters, but 18 wheatears have been spotted near

Branscombe, a ring ouzel near Beer Head and an avocet seen on the river.

The Garden Bird Watch recorded goldfinches as the most numerous species seen (167) though the result was slightly skewed by the fact that one garden had a roost of 48 of these colourful finches.

The next most common bird was the house sparrow with a total of 152 seen in 28 of the 39 gardens surveyed.

Surprising, perhaps, as we are told that the house sparrow is in severe decline.

Nationally that may be so, but not in my garden where it is the dominant species.

Some 67 species were recorded, including, oddly enough, a snipe, lesser redpoll, red-legged partridge and a heron.

As for butterflies, I have seen only one peacock, a brimstone and several large whites, but it is early days yet and, hopefully, the recent glorious weather may give a boost to these lovely insects.

However, a hummingbird hawkmoth has already been spotted in a lane near Bruckland Lakes.

This is very early for this moth, but the warm weather has probably been responsible.


To contact Tony Jackson, write to: Country Scene, South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD or by email to: wardjackson@tiscali.co.uk

The views expressed are those of the columnist and not necessarily of the newspaper.

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Recently she has been made a Fellow of the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis. She is an International Lecturer for The London College of Clinical Hypnosis (LCCH) and as such is well placed to keep her skills up to date.

Michelle says Hypnosis isn't Magic, but the results can sometimes be so amazing that for some they do seem magical.

In dealing with Anxiety based conditions Michelle has found it important to reassure people that Clinical Hypnosis is not like is portrayed on the stage or TV, it is very simply a way of getting your mind to accept change and find new behaviours and responses, so that they replace the old unwanted ones.

It is collaboration between therapist and client, and for most people it is a pleasant and relaxing experience.

For more information about the LCCH MSc Course Programme in Clinical Hypnosis (Exeter) or 1 day introductory courses and workshop (in Axminster, a new list of workshops is available in April).

To make an appointment for help with a wide variety of conditions in any of her clinics, give her a call or email her to see if she can help on 01297 20144 or 07761 773563 michelle@haguemail.co.uk



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THIS April The Artroom Galleries is delighted to announce it will be showcasing the outstanding Studio Collection 2011 by the UK's favourite artist Rolf Harris CBE

This major exhibition, which will be showcased in Taunton, has been curated in close consultation with Rolf, who has personally selected 10 magnificent paintings from his own studio.

Each print has been reproduced to the highest standard and is individually signed by Rolf. Each piece is numbered as a mark of its authenticity and status as a genuine collector's item.

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In 1992 Rolf was named the world's most famous artist in a massive poll conducted by the London artMart.

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Rolf shows his artwork

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Please note: This is a free service and whilst we endeavour to include all entries, we cannot guarantee all listings submitted will be published. Please use one form per event.

WE ARE UNABLE TO TAKE DIARY DATES LISTINGS OR QUERIES OVER THE PHONE
Deadline for Diary Dates entries is on Fridays at 12 noon

Diary dates

Monday, May 2nd

CHARDSTOCK: Chardstock Vintage Tractor and Machinery Club's Annual Tractor Trundle setting off at 11am from Chardstock Community Hall. More details from Jan Bond on 01460 220337.

UFFCULME: Uffculme Show - country fair and rare breeds sheep show at Bridwell Avenue, Uffculme from 10am - 5pm. Organised by the Rotary Club of Exe Valley who can be contacted on 01884840300.

Saturday, May 7th

HONITON: AJ's 17-piece Swing Band with a 40s night and music from the Glenn Miller era. Starts at 7.30pm at the Royal British Legion, Honiton. £14 for the show or £18 with a sausage and mash supper.

Sunday, May 15th

LUPPITT: A Sunday Stroll has been organised by the village hall committee starting at 2pm followed by tea at 4.30pm. For details of the start telephone 01404 892969.

Friday, May 20th

HONITON: The Darling Buds of May performed by the Honiton Players. Performances at 7pm on Friday and Saturday and at 2pm and 6pm on Sunday. Organised by Honiton Royal British Legion. Tickets are on sale now at the Honiton Toy Shop.

Saturday, June 4th

AXMINSTER: Clive Smith and his Arcadian Jazz Band will be playing in Axminster Arts Cafe courtyard garden from 11am — 1pm.

It's show time for the best of Devon living

With just six weeks to go before the largest annual extravaganza in Devon, activity is building at Devon County Showground at Westpoint, near Exeter.

The Devon County Show, now in its 116th year, boasts livestock, food and drink, a flower and garden marquee and lots of family entertainment on the 93 acre site.

Show Secretary Ollie Allen said: "When I'm asked what is the main attraction of this year's Show, the answer is easy: the Show is the star of the Show - it's all about bringing people together for a big day out."

And it is a big day out in all respects. The County Show expects to attract more than 90,000 visitors from May 19 to 21 to the event where there will be more than 7,000 animals, nearly 500 volunteer stewards and practically non-stop entertainment in six show rings.

There are hundreds of marquees - tentage tots up to nearly 300,000 square metres - accommodating passionate and committed people showcasing everything from handicrafts to food and drink.

Ollie Allen has drawn up the plans on paper and in the coming weeks will be marking out the spacious showground ready for the marquees to go up.

She said: "I'm finalising feature layouts and exhibitors plans, making sure I signs and 4" nails, good marker pens and a couple of

100m tapes to start measuring and marking out the trade stands next Monday.

"That's in between ordering up fencing panels, barriers, telephones, stables, fire extinguishers, tables, chairs, cookers, fridges, flower arrangements, crockery and organising the Stewards Supper for approximately 300. The Stewards Supper is when the huge team of volunteers get together to celebrate the forthcoming Show and discuss the hard work they will be doing in the forthcoming days to make sure everyone - whether exhibitor, sponsor, press and media or Show visitor has a fantastic time at the County Show".

Entertainment includes the dare-devil Bolddog Lings motorcycle display team, horse-back falconry displays and a 7-aside rugby tournament in the Sainsbury's Arena.

Devon County Show is on May 19-21 at Westpoint, Exeter. Once again children go free on Saturday and, for the first time, this year senior citizens are eligible for the buy-one-get-one-free offer on all three days of the Show as long as they buy the tickets before Wednesday 11th May. Additional savings are also available on tickets bought in advance. To book and for more information, ring 01392 353700, email info@dcshow.org or why not book them through our website www.devoncountyshow.co.uk.

Wordsearch

Here's a list of 12 of the many things to enjoy at this year's Devon County Show.

We've hidden eight in the Devon County Show word search competition.

We've circled one to get you started. See if you can find the remaining seven and enter the competition for a pair of tickets to the County Show.

T	F	A	R	C	Y	L	K	H
P	J	W	R	M	R	A	F	T
M	E	O	D	G	U	F	X	H
S	V	S	S	G	Z	S	G	R
P	L	Z	X	O	C	X	G	I
I	K	B	W	M	N	O	L	L
G	R	B	I	F	L	L	W	L
S	Y	T	S	A	T	P	Y	S
H	N	U	F	S	N	E	H	N

2011
**Devon
County Show**
19, 20, 21 May

1. COWS
2. RABBIT
3. FUN
4. TRACTOR
5. HENS
6. SHEEP
7. CRAFT
8. THRILLS
9. PIGS
10. DONKEY
11. TASTY
12. FARM

1 Energy boost

KITCHEN caffeine trips, excursions to the office biscuit stash and urgent discussions about sweets — or the indecent lack of them — dominate the day-to-day life of many workplaces.

But those colleagues who reject the need for caffeine and sugar stimuli, and sit under a Ready Brek glow with their cup of herbal tea and plate of sad-looking greens, tend to be treated by colleagues with suspicion — and ignored on the tea round.

According to nutritionist Rachael Anne Hill, there are ways we can all increase our energy levels and reduce cravings for custard creams, without resorting to any drastic lifestyle changes. And the GI Diet is one of them.

"The body absorbs energy from food at different rates," says Hill. "Using something called the Glycemic Index (GI) you can find out if a food will absorb energy quickly, and so have a high GI level, or vice versa."

Eating low-GI foods, she adds, can help individuals avoid energy spikes and slumps throughout the day, as well as having other health benefits.

"These foods will help prevent your blood sugar levels rapidly rising and then falling during the day, making it easier to concentrate while at work. A diet rich in low-GI foods can help you eat less, as you stay fuller longer, and they have nutritional advantages too."

Oaty plum crumbles (Serves 4)

GI Tip: Plums, like cherries, apples and pears, are a particularly low-GI fruit. The crumble topping is made with jumbo oats, which helps to keep the GI of the overall dessert low, too.

750g ripe plums, stoned and sliced
4tbsp water

1-2tbsp light muscovado sugar
Half-fat creme fraiche, low-fat custard or ice cream, to serve

For the crumble topping:
100g wholemeal self-raising flour
3tbsp polyunsaturated margarine
70g dark muscovado sugar
80g jumbo oats
1/4tsp freshly grated nutmeg
Caster sugar, for sprinkling

Place the plums, water and sugar in a saucepan. Heat until simmering, then simmer for 10-15 minutes, until the plums are just cooked and soft.

Meanwhile, to make the crumble topping, put the flour in a mixing bowl, add the margarine and rub it in with the tips of your fingers. The mixture should resemble breadcrumbs. Add the sugar, oats and nutmeg, and mix.

Divide the plums and their cooking liquid between four ramekins. Top with the crumble mixture, then sprinkle with a little caster sugar.

Bake in a preheated oven at 180C/Gas Mark 4 for 15-20 minutes, until the topping is golden and the fruit is bubbling. Serve warm with some half-fat creme fraiche, low-fat custard or ice cream.

Variation: Replace the plums with apples, cherries, pears, apricots, peaches or mixed berries. For some extra spice, add one tablespoon of grated fresh ginger to the crumble mixture.

■ Readers can purchase *GI High-Energy Cookbook* by Rachael Anne Hill, photographs by Nicki Dowey, published by Ryland Peters & Small, for £10.99 inc p&p (rrp £12.99) by calling Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting the reference GLR 4WK



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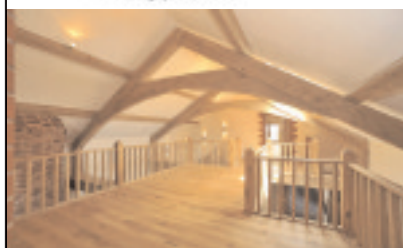
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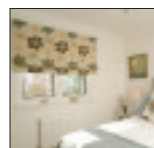
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GT-R icon

IT'S an icon of Japanese performance and its predecessors had a habit of humbling supercars for breakfast: say hello to the 2011-spec Nissan GT-R.

There's no mistaking it for anything else: its exterior design is focused on channelling air, feeding the engine and brakes and keeping it stuck to the road for as long as physically possible. Not that it is unattractive as a result, far from it in fact. It just has the simple appeal of a finely-honed chef's knife — purposeful and mightily effective.

Spotting the latest breed of GT-R requires dedication, not least because you won't see many about. This isn't a Nissan you'll see on every street corner: limited numbers will be available in the UK and only 14 hand-picked dealers have been entrusted with the privilege of selling you one. A car of this nature deserves respect.

There are plenty of other detail tweaks too. Sharpened aerodynamics, lighter wheels, improved cooling, retuned suspension and upgraded tyres, better cabin materials and even a low fuel consumption mode for when the mood takes you. This is more than just an annual update.

One thing that hasn't changed is the performance. Of course there is a little more power: an increase to take it to a Ferrari-bashing 523bhp. As ever, this power is channelled through a six-speed dual clutch gearbox to the fiendishly clever four-wheel drive system. Clever because the numerous electronic brains constantly monitor a whole range of vehicle parameters in order to achieve maximum acceleration and minimal slip. If that sounds like a dull way of going about things, then you could not be more wrong.

For a car that will nudge 200mph in a straight line, it is anything but intimidating. Pop open the sleek aluminium door handle to climb inside and the layout before you is purposeful but welcoming. The small, chunky steering wheel has the feel of a racing car, and the superb Recaro seats adjust over a wide range but however it's set it will

clamp you in place, ready for the G-forces to come.

Start up, slip the transmission lever into automatic and you'll wonder what all the fuss is about. It pulls away as seamlessly as a family hatch with only a rumble from the exhausts and the firmness of the ride to give any indication that there's more on offer. There's even the option of softening up the suspension for bumpier roads, as well as setting the stability control and rear diff to more sympathetic settings. It will even operate in two-wheel drive during tight manoeuvres to avoid any unpleasant transmission shunt. Like any true supercar of the modern age, it can do the boring stuff without throwing tantrums and making you wish you'd taken the bus.

It's a true everyday supercar, and you'll take every mile of it without hesitation for the pleasure it provides when the road conditions go in your favour. Not that you need good weather and a sunny day: rain, wind or shine, the GT-R is equipped to deploy every ounce of its performance regardless of conditions.

Even the smallest gap in traffic is enough. The merest squeeze of the accelerator brings in the twin turbochargers, and despite the mammoth output there is a large wedge of torque available from low revs. But if you want the full effect, switch the transmission to manual, sharpen the suspension and transmission modes and push the throttle to the floor. Before you get to the carpet the GT-R surges forward and begins to eat up the asphalt in front. Beyond 3,000rpm the scenery starts to blur and your eyes will instinctively widen, all accompanied by a purposeful roar from the tailpipes. Should you be on a suitable stretch of straight and derestricted road the GT-R will punch all the way up to a spectacular 196mph with the seamlessness of the gearchanges simply adding to the dramatic acceleration. There may be hypercars that could out run it, but none of them can match the GT-R's ability to deploy this performance so easily and so frequently.

And all this drama can be brought to a halt in a flash

thanks to the mighty carbon brakes. Learn hard on them and they will not wilt, a twitch of the steering wheel and it will dive in to the bend exactly as your inputs demand. The grip on offer is eye-widening, and you have complete control aided by the four-wheel drive system for maximum acceleration out the other side. It has the capability to despatch bends far above what the average driver would think possible, and yet all the time you are kept completely in the loop with a constant stream of feedback through the steering wheel.

It's a sensory overload when you want and yet it can cope with the humdrum without breaking sweat. It has the kudos and the looks to turn heads wherever it goes and needs no excuses when pulling alongside the established supercar hierarchy. But the sucker punch is the price: starting at £69,950, the Nissan GT-R runs rings around similarly-priced exotica. All you need to do is sign on the dotted line.

Facts at a glance

- Model: Nissan GT-R, £69,950
- Engine: 3.6-litre petrol unit producing 523bhp and 451lb.ft of torque
- Transmission: Six-speed dual clutch transmission driving all four wheels
- Performance: Top speed 196mph, 0-62mph in 3.1 seconds
- Economy: 23.5 mpg combined
- Emissions: 279g/km of CO2



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Honiton 01404 45885



BAGBOROUGH

A charming detached cottage enjoying stunning views towards the Quantock Hills on the outskirts of this highly favoured village. Ref: 45234

Guide price £475,000

Taunton 01823 256625



BLACKBOROUGH

A most attractive Victorian farmhouse in a delightful rural hamlet. 2 Reception rooms. Kitchen/breakfast room. Garden room. Laundry room. Shower room. 3 Double bedrooms. Family bathroom. Covered courtyard/utility area. Gardens. Ref: 36965

Guide price £325,000

Honiton 01404 45885



BLACKDOWN HILLS

A superbly located residential holding comprising a three bedroom cottage with spacious two bedroom detached bungalow and two storey barn offering enormous potential. All set within approximately 6 acres of land and located in a beautiful rural, yet accessible location on the slopes of the Blackdown Hills Ref: 42571

Guide price £750,000

Wellington 01823 662822



BLACKDOWN HILLS

A substantial barn conversion centred around a cobbled courtyard and enjoying fine country views over the surrounding countryside Ref: 43585

Guide price £650,000

Wellington 01823 662822



COMBE RALEIGH

An attached rural cottage with scope for improvement in an unspoilt location with garden and views. Sitting room, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility/boot room, bathroom, 2 bedrooms, 1 en suite shower. Outbuildings. Ref: 44819

Guide price £210,000

Honiton 01404 45885

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